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Chair

Mr. Stephen Fuhr

Standing Committee on National Defence

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● (0845)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order.

Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the defence committee on this rainy Thursday morning. I'm going to start. I know we're missing one witness, but I believe that one of our witnesses has to leave at 9:45, so I'd like to get started.

Today we have, as an individual, Marie-Joëlle Zahar, who is Professor and Research Director of the Peace Operations Network at the University of Montreal; Walter Dorn, who is a Professor at the Royal Military College of Canada in the Department of Defence Studies; and Carolyn McAskie, O.C., who is a Former Special Sepresentative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Burundi.

Maybe we'll start with you, Ms. Zahar, so that we can get your testimony.

Members, keep in mind that Ms. Zahar can only stay until around 9:45. If you have a question for her, get that question on the table sooner rather than later.

Ms. Zahar, the floor is yours.

Dr. Marie-Joëlle Zahar (Professor and Research Director of the Peace Operations Network, Université de Montreal, As an Individual): Good morning, all, and thank you for the invitation.

I'd like to put my presentation in context, briefly.

Between 2013 and 2015 I was detached to the United Nations as a mediation expert. I was following the Algiers negotiations quite closely. I've been involved in the negotiations for four of the six rounds. This is the perspective from which I will be talking, with a special focus on Mali but also with a broader concern for Canada's re-engagement with peacekeeping.

My presentation will cover four points. I want to present a brief overview of my own reading of our history with respect to peacekeeping, not because the members of the committee don't know the facts but because interpretations vary, and I think it is something important. I will describe current deployment environments for UN peacekeeping operations, with a particular focus on the situation in Mali. I'll assess Canada's intended contributions. I will also provide some general thoughts about our return to peacekeeping.

Let me start with our past contributions to peacekeeping. In the interests of time, I'm going to try to be brief. There is more detail in the brief that I have submitted to you.

I want to highlight that we have a very long and rich history with peacekeeping, involving our participation in more than 40 missions by the middle of the last decade. Even then, we ranked still only 55th out of 108 UN troop-contributing countries.

We incurred a number of fatalities—exactly 122. However, these were mostly in the context of deployments in places that were not necessarily the most dangerous environments we have been in, including during the first Suez crisis and in Cyprus, Bosnia, and Haiti.

Since Canada's withdrawal from peacekeeping, the figures released by the Department of National Defence indicate that only 22 Canadians are currently deployed in four missions authorized by the United Nations. The UN's count is slightly different, because the UN counts staff officers, police, and experts on mission. According to the UN figures, we contribute 40 persons to five peacekeeping operations, or PKOs. Those are in Haiti, South Sudan, the DRC, UNTSO in the Golan Heights, and Cyprus.

This is at a time when—and I think the comparison is important—the UN has upwards of 110,000 blue helmets deployed in 14 missions and when a significant number of our western allies, including France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the Scandinavian countries, all re-engaged with UN peacekeeping two years ago, or almost three years ago today.

None of this is new to you, but allow me to highlight my two takeaways from this history.

First, we have deployed peacekeepers in diverse environments ranging from less to more complex and from less to more dangerous, and our fatalities did not necessarily happen in the most dangerous of contexts.

My second takeaway is that while our engagement in peacekeeping may reflect normative values, it's also about *realpolitik*. It is an integral part of Canada's strategy to contribute to international peace and security on a par with non-UN deployments, such as those in Afghanistan or, more recently, those in Latvia. It is an integral part of our effort to share the burden of international peace and security with our allies, and I think that needs to be front and centre in our minds as we think about re-engaging.

My second point is about current deployment environments. They have changed since Canada was last part of a UN mission. Violent conflict is on the rise, and there are at least four characteristics of violent conflicts that we need to take into account.

The first is that they're much more regionalized than internationalized, as they used to be. Most of today's wars are not civil wars; they are "internationalized civil wars", in the jargon of academics. That means that there are foreign states and non-state actors who play a role in instigating, prolonging, or exacerbating struggles.

● (0850)

In Mali, transnational jihadist groups such as al Qaeda and the Islamic State have latched on to the grievances of local actors to connect what was a traditional insurgency to broader transnational ideological struggles. The creation of the G5 Sahel Cross-Border Joint Force in July of 2017 has also contributed to regionalizing the Mali conflict, with recent terrorist attacks targeting not only sites on the Malian territory but increasingly G5 Sahel member states as well, including, most recently, Burkina Faso.

The second thing that we need to look at is the emergence of extremist groups. Instability and violent conflict are a fertile breeding ground for extremist movements. By the way, they are also the natural theatre for UN peace operations. Of the 11 countries most affected by terrorism globally, seven host UN peace operations. However, it's important to highlight that all researchers agree that classifying extremist and terrorist actors remains a policy and operational challenge and that it's an exercise that is often instrumentalized by actors with ulterior motives.

In Mali, for example, it is interesting to note that the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad, the name that insurgents give to the north of Mali, has been included on several lists of terrorist groups with which, when you look at the rest, it shares very little by way of ideology or political objectives. One explanation that Mali experts have considered is that the NMLA is the most dangerous political opponent of the Government of Mali because of its secular nature and its autonomist objectives, which are likely to draw broad support among communities in the north.

In terms of current environments, the third point I'd like to raise is the multiplication and fragmentation of conflict actors. It has never been as great as in today's wars. In Syria today, we count approximately 3,000 self-identified groups, ranging from groups with a couple of people to more substantial organized forces. In Mali, the fragmentation of northern anti-government forces and their composition and re-composition into ever-shifting alliances and counter-alliances remains one of the main obstacles to achieving sustainable peace. As Arthur Boutellis of the International Peace Institute and I argued in a report that was published last June, this fragmentation, which has created divisions and armed struggles between erstwhile allied clans, is also the result of a divide-and-rule strategy adopted by the government and some of its northern allies.

The last point that I want to raise about new deployment environments is the increase in violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. This has been highlighted in the report of UN Secretary-General Antònio Guterres on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. I will not read the quote from the report, since you have it. I will only say that Mali is no exception to the trend and that today ongoing insecurity, limited economic opportunities, and the lack of access to basic services in parts of the north, and increasingly in the centre of the country, continue to prevent the voluntary return of high numbers of refugees and internally displaced people.

Therefore, the characteristics of these current conflicts complicate the search for peace. In Mali, when I was participating in the Algiers peace process, we achieved a peace agreement, which was signed in Bamako in June 2015. However, that peace agreement was achieved at the cost of clarity. It was an agreement in broad principles that left a lot to be agreed upon during implementation. It has failed to yield peace and stability. Instead, insecurity has spread to the centre of the country. This is not the place to elaborate on the reasons, and there are no parties that are not guilty in this sad state of affairs. It's important to us what this means for efforts to consolidate peace in the country. I'd like to submit that this makes the success of the UN mission all the more important, because there is a risk of heightened instability as Mali has entered, this summer, an important crucial electoral period.

Second, due to all of the forces present in the country, the UN mission is the only operation with a clear mandate not only to address instability and insecurity but also to support peaceful resolution of the underlying issues.

Also, to date, the security approaches of other actors, including the French Barkhane operation and the G5 Sahel, have actually backfired and thrown more people into the lap of terrorist groups.

● (0855)

Against that, I'd like to assess the intended contribution of Canada to MINUSMA.

Canada wants to deploy helicopters to provide transport and logistical capacity and to provide armed escort protection. Canada also wants to help with medical evacuations and logistical support on the ground.

This contribution reflects the government's pledge to re-engage in peacekeeping in ways that will affect the overall effectiveness of UN peace operations and help address, if not fill, critical gaps. This also reflects, to my knowledge, the most serious gaps and needs of MINUSMA.

MINUSMA has repeatedly highlighted that this is what it needs and what it cannot get from a majority of troop-contributing countries. The mission's field offices in northern Mali have come under attack by various spoilers of the peace process. The high number of fatalities is partly due to logistical difficulties of attending to injuries in situ and providing reliable evacuation of the wounded towards places where they can be taken care of.

A quick search of the data publicly available on the website of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations confirms that at least 143 of the 166 MINUSMA fatalities come from troop-contributing countries whose militaries are deployed as part of the ground forces of the mission. These are mostly countries from the south. They're not the western troops of MINUSMA.

As such, I think that not only would the Canadian forces be helping reduce the number of casualties, but based on current trends of who is most in danger, they would not be a primary target.

Here are some quick thoughts about Canada's return to peacekeeping. Peacekeeping has changed since Canada last deployed blue helmets. Settings are more unstable, as I just argued, because of a constellation of factors. Not only are these peacekeeping settings unstable, but if they are not kept in check, the chance that insecurity could spread beyond the borders of states is greater today, because of the regional and international conjuncture, than it ever was since the end of the Cold War.

This suggests to me that re-engaging in peacekeeping is not really a choice for Canada or for any country like Canada whose prosperity and security depend on international peace and security. Re-engaging in peacekeeping, while not danger free, is a necessity to prevent trouble spots in Mali or elsewhere from becoming open sores and the source of regional and international instability.

Thus, it seems to me that it is incumbent on any troop-contributing country to assess how it can best improve the efficiency of peace operations while at the same time reducing the risk to its own troops. It is my assessment that in choosing the kind of deployments it has, the Canadian government has done exactly that in this specific case.

● (0900)

The Chair: Thank you very much for those remarks.

I'm sensitive to the fact that you have to leave a little bit early, so I let you run long. I think the committee wanted to hear what you had to say. I would ask the others, if you could, to restrict your thoughts to 10 minutes. I would appreciate that. If you see this come up, it means you have 30 seconds to wrap up so that we can move forward.

I'd like to give the floor to Ms. McAskie.

Welcome.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie (Former Special Representative of the Secretary General and Head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Burundi, As an Individual): Thank you very much. I'll try to condense my notes and take advantage of the questions.

Like Marie-Joëlle, I'll explain my context for being here.

I think most of you know that I am one of the few Canadians who has actually served in the field, in my case as a special representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN peace operations mission in Burundi, with a chapter 7 mandate, from 2004 to 2006. I led an integrated comprehensive mission made up of 5,600 troops, 120 police, and 1,000 civilians.

Let me make a comment on your context now. I have to say I was sorry to see that your study is called "Canada's role in peacekeeping".

The Chair: We're working on it and considering something else, actually.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: As I will explain, the days of what we knew as peacekeeping are long over.

I'm also sorry to see that this study is restricted, for the moment—I'm sure not indefinitely—to a study by the Standing Committee on National Defence. I would advocate that, given the political nature of these missions, such a study could be usefully managed jointly by your committee and the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

I strongly welcome the current government's plans to return to UN operations. I think our absence has been to the detriment of our reputation. Peace missions need Canada, and also NATO. The UN-NATO argument is, I think, a false one; it's not an either-or issue. We have, though, to contend with the fact that Canada's experience predates the reforms that have characterized the last 20 years.

Marie-Joëlle has explained very well how the conflicts have changed. My point is more that the UN has changed. When you listen to witnesses whose experience is from the 1990s, you need to listen also to your UN witnesses who will be coming later and to see what enormous changes the UN has made in the last 10 to 20 years, particularly kicking off in the year 2000 with the Brahimi report and the creation of comprehensive missions under a civilian leader and bringing in all other aspects, normally also including development and humanitarian aspects.

I realize there isn't a development pillar in Mali, but there is a large development program coming from the donors in Mali. This gave a much greater link between the mission, the Secretary-General, and the Security Council. I met with General Dallaire before I went to Burundi and showed him my mandate. He was astonished. What happened to him in Rwanda can not happen again, nor what happened in the Balkans.

I have a few little points to make, but in the interests of time I won't elaborate on all of them.

First of all, number one, when you talk about the UN, you have to define what you mean by the UN. The UN is not an entity in and of itself, acting independently, financed independently. Remember that you're talking about member states. Any failures are the failures of member states.

Canada has been absent for a long time and has been very critical, yet has not taken the effort to get in there and fix the problems that it criticizes. Some of you may be old enough to remember the Pogo cartoon, when Pogo said, "We have seen the enemy, and it is us." We have to take responsibility for this situation.

Second, as I mentioned in my intro, don't get hung up on traditional peacekeeping. There has been no such thing since the Cold War, except on the exercise.... I can elaborate on that, if people wish. Also, don't confuse the UN concept of integrated missions—with the political deputy, the force commander, the development and humanitarian deputy, and the civilian SRSG—with Canada's experience of integrated missions and whole-of-government approaches in Afghanistan. This is not that. In Afghanistan, it was definitely the military in the lead; in the UN, it's the civilian lead and the political process that drive it.

The next point, if you'll pardon my expression, is to ignore the nervous Nellies. Of course it's dangerous; why else would we be going? It's a war zone; of course armies have to take precautions. Of course I'm sensitive to the political and human side of casualties, absolutely, but if we want a casualty-free war, why do we have 68,000 really good, well-trained, experienced troops? Why bother? Are we then to leave the heavy lifting to others?

Remember, Canadian civilians with no support from their government have been on the front lines all along. When I joined the UN in 1999 as humanitarian relief coordinator, it was at a time when there was a pullback internationally from peacekeeping. More humanitarians died on the front lines in 1998 than peacekeepers. Let's think about that.

The next point is to understand the full meaning of our self-interest. In this day of cross-border terrorism, environmental health, and migrant issues, our national interest is a global one. What happens across our borders is in our national interest. We must get away from the narrow concept of national interests as ideas of direct benefit to us.

● (0905)

We're an international player; we always have been. Global peace and security is absolutely fundamental to our security, health, environment, immigration, trade—to everything. If we stand back and let these crises roll without playing a part, then we will reap the consequences. Two hundred years ago Alexis de Tocqueville—you should read him—said of "self-interest properly understood" that "common welfare is in fact a pre-condition for one's own ultimate well-being".

The next point is to invest in training, not just for Canadians but for third world partners. You see before you the very sad former vice-chair of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, which had the rug pulled out from under it by some of your predecessors. You can't put it together again—it's gone—but you can find a way of having something rise from the ashes.

I would recommend strongly that you look to a Swedish institute, the Folke Bernadotte Academy. It is inside and outside government, independent but working closely with government, with finance, but also working with NGOs. It is highly respected. There are many other models; I mention that one. Personally, it's my favourite.

Let me mention also the issue of sexual exploitation in the UN. A lot has been written about how bad the UN is because of sexual exploitation. Well, what's happened in the last few months has blown that one wide open. This is not just a UN problem; yes, it is a UN problem, which the UN is trying desperately to deal with, but it is also a military problem, as we know well enough here in Canada. It's also a male violence issue in all institutions.

I just met with my financial adviser yesterday, who quit a major Canadian bank because of something that happened. I won't say which bank and I won't say what happened.

It's a human rights issue, it's a "protection of civilians" issue, and the UN needs our help in dealing with it. Member states will not punish the perpetrators, even once they are identified by the UN.

The next point is to ask where the commitment is to involving more women. I suggest you all look up the Mano River Peace Network, the women's peace movement in Liberia and Sierra Leone, where the women actually brought an end to the Liberian war. This is not just a question of whether we have some more female soldiers or enough female policemen or whether there is a woman at the table. No, it's a fundamental issue that makes a difference. It is proven that it makes a difference to peace and security. Think about it.

I'm sorry to be so colloquial here, but what I have written down is, "Go big or go home"—but go strategically. We talked about deploying up to 600. That's a good start. Actually we're starting now with 250. I have a letter, addressed to me personally in response to a query I sent to the Minister of National Defence, saying that they were still committed to 600. That was about a year ago. The delays are affecting our ability to influence the situation. We have to move now or we're not going to be at the table.

I won't talk about how many we have, because I looked up the UN figures and Marie-Joëlle mentioned figures and we have the expert on the figures here, so he will tell you how many we have and where they are.

We need a long-term strategy, especially for Africa.

The last point is on the Mali mission itself.

Mali has been an important partner. It's a good choice. Yes, it's dangerous, as I said, but where is it not dangerous? We've had a development program for years of anything up to $100 million a year. There are a dozen Canadian mining companies in Mali with an investment of $1.5 billion. In the 1990s, if you were a Canadian and walked into Bamako, you were welcomed with open arms. You have to know your history and understand the deep connections between Mali and Canada.

● (0910)

You can say to the Canadian public, "These are our friends", but we have stood back and ignored the signs of trouble over the last years. However, we must not abandon our friends just because it's difficult or dangerous.

The peace agreement with the rebels is in fact holding. The rebels have not broken the peace in the last six or nine months. The issue is the criminal and terrorist actors.

There are positive requirements, but we also need to make sure we have a development program to match, because it's a development investment that will undercut the criminal and terrorist acts.

If we want to contribute to the success of the mission, we need a place at the table—the political table. We don't have that now. Our contribution, military or financial, has to be enough to give us a voice. Otherwise, we're just playing around the edges.

Lastly, on the UN, as I said, our own security depends intimately on the successful workings of the international rules-based system that Canadians have helped to build over the last 70 years. If we are not prepared to work within that system, to support its ideals, to provide it with resources, and to strengthen it against all of its challenges, then we cannot blame others if it fails. Why is it so hard to understand that we have a responsibility to play our part to ensure the safe and secure world that is essential to our own well-being?

We have had a reputation—have had—for being a significant and supportive player. Are we back? Many Canadians are waiting to find out.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Dorn, the floor is yours.

Professor Walter Dorn (Professor, Royal Military College of Canada, Department of Defence Studies, As an Individual): Thank you.

I'm very happy to be part of this majority-women panel.

Thank you very much for allowing me to share my thoughts on UN peacekeeping or, using the term I prefer, UN peace operations, of which peacekeeping is a part.

Peace operations are of importance to me as an operational academic because they are of great importance to Canada, to the people in the conflict areas, and to the United Nations, our world organization. Despite all their flaws, UN operations remain one of the best ways to prevent, manage, and resolve conflict. I have spent 30 years studying them, 20 years teaching military officers about them, and over 10 years working with the United Nations, including the field missions earlier this year in Mali. I remain convinced that even in the worst mission areas, there is some peace to keep, people to protect, and initiatives to support. Canada needs to help and has much to contribute.

Being a scientist by training, I rely on factual data to describe trends. In the graphs that I've circulated to the committee, you'll find in graph 1 the number of Canadian uniformed personnel deployed on UN operations since 1950, when a Canadian general led the military observer group in Kashmir. You'll see the big jump that happens in 1956 when the United Nations deployed, on the suggestion of Lester B. Pearson, the United Nations emergency force. We went beyond unarmed observers and deployed armed units in a truly international peace and police force. That's when our number of troops rose to over 1,000. Then Canada helped put together the peacekeeping force in Cyprus in 1964 and again contributed after the Yom Kippur War with UNEF II.

At the end of the Cold War we saw a plethora of new missions in Somalia, Bosnia, Cambodia, and then Rwanda. Canada's deployments, police and military combined, climbed to a peak of 3,300 in July 1993. Canada's identity is built partly on the excellent work of the military personnel and the diplomats who made Canada one of the world's top peacekeepers in the second half of the last century.

After 1995, the UN stopped creating new missions for a few years, and then it surged in the new century, but Canada kept its numbers low, at about 300 to 500. The last time Canada deployed armed units in peace operations was in Ethiopia and Eritrea, as Carolyn mentioned, and in Haiti.

At present Canada provides no units and only 47 personnel as individuals, 23 police only in Haiti, and 24 military personnel in Haiti, the Congo, Cyprus, South Sudan, and the Middle East. You'll see the numbers there.

Until 2006 Canada provided logisticians to the Golan Heights in Syria, but these were withdrawn under the pressures of the Afghanistan campaign, halving the numbers to about 150 total in peacekeeping, as shown in graph 2. You'll see the drop at the left side of that graph.

The numbers dropped further with the present government. When Canada hosted the UN peacekeeping defence ministerial conference in Vancouver, the number fell to the lowest level since Pearson proposed the first peacekeeping force in 1956, and it went down further in January. It has picked up slightly since. Currently, the government deploys less than half the number deployed on average by the previous government. If you're interested, I update the numbers monthly on my website—walterdorn.net—on a page titled "Tracking the Promises".

Graph 3 shows Canada's rank among nations contributing personnel, moving from the number one position, which we held during the Cold War—and in the early 1990s we maintained that position—to the current position as number 74 among personnel contributions to the UN.

For reference, I also added graph 4, showing the total number of forces deployed in UN peacekeeping operations, and you can see that while Canada is near an all-time low, the UN is near an all-time high. At present the UN Secretary-General deploys more forces on operations than any other leader in the world, including the President of the United States.

Having been seconded to the UN over the past year, thanks to funding from Global Affairs Canada, I worked at UN headquarters and conducted technical visits to five peace operations. I can declare with certainty that the UN has many highly competent individuals who go beyond the call of duty and work selflessly, risking life and limb to save vulnerable people.

● (0915)

I can't help but pay tribute to members of my own team. When I deployed back in 1999 in East Timor, I lost a member of my team and there was a massacre in a church complex where I conducted voter education. That experience only deepened my conviction that we had to make the UN work. After 450 years of colonialism and occupation, the Timorese people finally had their chance to gain independence, and that was due to a UN operation.

Fortunately, the UN has improved immensely since that time. We can't judge UN activities by the experiences and tragedies of me in 1999 or of soldiers who served a quarter of a century ago. UN headquarters has improved its field support in many ways since the last large deployment of Canadian Forces, which was in Bosnia in 1994 and 1995.

For example, at the time, the Office of Military Affairs was run by a Canadian general, General Maurice Baril. He had a staff of about half a dozen people. Now the Office of Military Affairs has more than 120 military officers serving, from about 70 different countries. Unfortunately, Canada is not currently one of the countries employed in OMA as UN staff.

The UN's capacity has grown immensely in so many different areas, including the areas in which I work: technology, intelligence, doctrine, training, and protection of civilians.

Unlike the UN's, Canada's capacity for peace operations has declined. With few personnel deployed over the past two decades, the Canadian Armed Forces have less experience than in previous generations and do much less training. With the closure of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre in 2013, we no longer have a place where military, police, and civilians can train and educate together. Although the Peace Support Training Centre, or PSTC, in Kingston, with its new Paul A. Mayer Building, does excellent work, its program is only for the military, it is mostly aimed at the tactical level, and only a small fraction of its program is actually focused on the UN specifically.

In a report, "Unprepared for Peace?", I documented the decline of peacekeeping training more generally in the Canadian Armed Forces. As the only person who teaches a course on peace operations at the command and staff level, I can tell you that the number of activities in the Canadian Armed Forces has dropped to less than a quarter of what it was in 2005, with fewer exercises and almost no role-playing as UN peacekeepers, though some efforts are now being made to reinvigorate the peace operations curriculum.

Some other hard-hitting facts also sadden me. Canada seeks to increase dramatically the number of women in UN peace operations, yet we are failing to lead by example, with only three military women deployed, even as many individual women are willing to seek deployment and are eager to deploy on missions.

I've had women in my office saying that they've been trying for years to get on UN operations but that the opportunities just haven't been there. Now there will be some exciting opportunities for air force officers and women in the helicopter detachments to deploy in UN peacekeeping with the announcement of Mali, and I hope opportunities will come for men and women in the army and navy as well.

I could talk about Mali, but I'll leave that for the question period, because I'm sure questions will be raised about it. I have done fatality statistical analysis there, and I'd like at some point to address the issue of child soldiers in Mali.

In conclusion, there is so much to do to re-engage in peace operations. We have to be careful not to suffer from paralysis by analysis. We've had a number of years now of dithering and delay that have actually caused the UN problems in its deployments. My suggestion is that we adopt a modus operandi of "push what moves", meaning that we start working quickly on a whole range of activities so that we get the experience we need to find the initiatives in which we can make breakthroughs.

I have submitted a brief with more than 40 suggestions. You can use it as a kind of smorgasbord to look at which ones you might want to choose to highlight.

Canada can become a really constructive force on the international stage, helping bring peace to war-torn areas of the world. Only then can we help heal the open wounds of the world body that hemorrhage problems to the rest of the globe. Only then can refugee flows be diminished, diseases be eradicated, and terrorism be cut off at its source. Only then can Canada truly say it is back.

Thank you.

● (0920)

The Chair: Thank you very much. Those were fascinating opening remarks.

We have a new approach, which could be applied to Mali or anything we choose to do in the future, and we have a mission specifically to talk about, so there is much to talk about.

I'm going to start the first seven-minute questioning with MP Spengemann. The floor is yours.

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I'd like to thank all three witnesses for being with us. Thank you for your expertise and your service.

I would like to focus on the qualitative human element of peace operations, because I believe that peace operations are the people's business. I'd like to focus my questions on Ms. McAskie. I have seven minutes. Seven minutes doesn't begin to do justice to your expertise and insights, but I will try to unpack some of the themes.

I appreciate your comments that this subject matter extends far beyond the purview of defence and that it's important that within the parameters of this study, the defence community consider itself not just as a link in the chain but a part of a larger integrated whole.

I'd like to begin with the notion of complexity. We raised it at the last committee meeting, and you made reference to it. This subject matter is complex. In fact, you were the first Canadian to have led, as an SRSG, one of the UN's "complex missions". It was explicitly termed a complex mission.

In a brief thumbnail sketch, could you tell the Canadian public what that means? What is a complex mission? What are its components?

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: Although the word is "complex", the answer is reasonably straightforward. The idea is that prior to 1999 the UN presence in the field was fairly fragmented. In many instances, the force commander operated independently—not totally independently, but independently—of other UN operations on the ground.

One of the great tragedies for Roméo Dallaire was that there was a political director on the ground who had a very, shall we say, distorted view of what was actually going on. General Dallaire had absolutely no support there. Also, the UN humanitarian and development operations had for a long time been run through a UN resident coordinator, but with no relationship to the military mission or to the political office.

One of the major recommendations of the Brahimi report in the year 2000 was the idea of a complex mission whereby all of the UN operations would work together and the mission would consist of specific pillars under a strategic plan, which would flow from the mandate as described by a Security Council resolution. The Security Council resolution would lay out all of the elements of a UN presence on the ground.

The development arms, which have voluntary funding rather than the assessed funding that peacekeeping and headquarters operations have—and if anyone wants to know the difference between those two things, I'm happy to explain—continued to operate quite a bit independently. It was a little difficult in the early years of the first decade of this century to get the development people to actually sit at the table with the political officers and the development officers.

The humanitarians too had a hard time with that. Humanitarians had been operating on their own, as I mentioned. They'd been out there on the front lines before the peacekeepers really started cranking up after 2000, and they were very reluctant to be seen in the company of peacekeepers, because although peacekeepers were neutral and international, the fact is that by various sides of the conflict they were seen as supporting the national interest, even if that wasn't the case. The humanitarians were thus used to negotiating their own way across enemy lines to deliver the goods.

Anyway, that's a complex matter that is never, ever really going to be totally solved.

● (0925)

Mr. Sven Spengemann: No, I think that's—

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: Anyway, "complex mission" just means the pillars under a full strategic approach that has been approved by the Security Council.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thank you so much for that.

Going back to the qualitative human elements, as I mentioned initially, one of the insights I gained from serving in an integrated UN mission is about the importance of trust—trust from government to government, trust within the military branches, trust within the civil society of the country that's being assisted.

Could you comment on how important that is? What I'm getting at is, who do we send to these missions, with what kind of skill sets? I'm particularly interested in the set of soft skills, the human gut-level skills of building trust. It took my team the better part of a year to get counterparts in the government we were assisting to even listen, let alone talk, and then to give their full view of their political challenges.

How do we do that well? How do we amplify the importance of trust and send people who are skilled in building it?

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: It has to start from your recognizing that the country you're being sent to is a member of the UN, just like you. You're not there to make it better; you're there to support their efforts. You need to have military people who are also diplomats and diplomats who understand the military aspects. You need to have all these people training together.

There's a wonderful course—I don't know whether it's still running, though Walter might be able to tell me—which, after I retired, I was a part of. It's the leadership training course of the United Nations. Canada has participated in it. We've funded some of the meetings.

Is it still going on?

Prof. Walter Dorn: It is.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: It's still going on. It brings together potential or actual candidates for top military, top political, top development positions and trains them all together in understanding what a complex mission is. It trains the military in the "what part of civilian control of the military don't you understand?" type of thing and trains the political side to understand the role the military can play.

Every situation is different, but you need people who are sensitive to local conditions. One of the most important things, which I've said throughout my whole career—throughout development, humanitarian, political, peacebuilding, peacekeeping—is that you have to get all the parties together to try to get a common understanding of what the real problems are.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Let me stop you there for a second—I have about 30 seconds left—to put a fairly specific idea to you. One thing the Americans did well in Iraq was that they deployed reserve officers into positions that dealt with governance questions and challenges vis-à-vis the Government of Iraq—people who had life skills, who understood the human element.

Is that something we should look at as a potential way to contribute even more effectively?

● (0930)

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: What do you mean by "reserve"—military reservists?

Mr. Sven Spengemann: I mean people who were in the national reserve of their country, deployed to a foreign country because they had a broader skill set than just military ops.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: I'm not familiar with how you would define the skill set of Canadian reservists, but I think you would want to make sure that you had people who understood the situation on the ground and who were trained in dealing with civil society as well as government.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thank you.

I think that's my time, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thanks, Mr. Spengemann.

MP Gallant is next.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Mali mission is really beginning to sound a lot like Afghanistan. We had the Taliban there, and here we have the Tuaregs, al Qaeda, and then new actors altogether. This sounds more like an anti-insurgency, counter-terrorism operation, and the statement was even made, "It's a war zone."

The difference is our mission, of course. In Afghanistan we didn't have the helicopters to do this type of mission, and that of course goes back to the cancellation of the EH101 contract. When we had military commanders here last week, they even said that in protecting the helicopters, they would be using the same provisions they had used in Afghanistan with respect to air protection.

It really sounds as though the difference between this mission and Afghanistan is that we were in Afghanistan because a NATO member country was attacked by somebody who was trained in Afghanistan, and we don't know that there's been a terrorist attack by somebody trained in Mali. It's all being repackaged under the rubric of peacekeeping because that's more palatable to the public, and of course the government can avoid debate.

What's really difficult to see—and granted, we do have mining companies present there—is how this mission is in the national interest. The intangible benefit of spreading this government's Canadian values has many people unconvinced that it's going to be worth the blood and treasury.

My questions will be based along the lines of the experience we've had in peacekeeping missions. Again, that's what we're concerned about. When it's a UN mission, the chain of command has not been as reliable as we've seen in, for instance, NATO missions.

The question I'd like to first ask is to Dr. Zahar, and it relates to her experience there.

Canada lost 159 troops in Afghanistan, and among them 132 were lost because of explosives. They had direct fire, suicide attacks by the Islamic militants. How would you characterize the capabilities and threat levels of the terrorist groups who are taking the fight to the UN forces in Mali? They're targeting peacekeepers.

Dr. Marie-Joëlle Zahar: If I may, I'd like to start by addressing your comparison of Mali and Afghanistan to say that Mali has the potential of becoming Afghanistan, but it's not there yet. That's why it's very important, in my opinion, to not just look at the headlines. Mali has a functional government. It has multiple groups, including armed groups in the north whom we call Islamist or terrorist, who actually want a political deal and want the country to get back on its feet.

It does have problems in implementing its peace agreement, and these problems are actually part of the reason that groups such as al Qaeda are trying to manipulate the people who are dissatisfied and offer them more.

What do they offer them? They offer basic services that the government of Mali doesn't yet have the capacity to extend to all of its population, not just in the north, but particularly in the north. They offer a sense of security, because there are no police, and border raids are common. Then in return what they want is allegiance, and then you have the kinds of concerns that you've raised.

In other words, we still have, I think, a very decent chance in Mali of turning the tide. Mali has had three peace agreements before. They have not been fully implemented, in part because no one had the national interest or vision, I will say, to stay long enough to see that they were implemented. Various international partners fake it, to put it bluntly.

To your question, to the best of my knowledge the groups that are currently operating in Mali can use IEDs, but they don't have very sophisticated equipment. In other words, they do not pose the same kind of threat that al Qaeda does in Afghanistan or as the Taliban did in Afghanistan.

There are many small groups emerging and trying to use allegiance to al Qaeda or to the Islamic state as a way of securing resources. What's interesting about those groups, particularly in the centre of Mali, is that we may disagree with the way in which they do it, but the resources are being used to establish governance and to basically provide some sort of justice and services to people. In other words, it's a market in which, when the government cannot deliver, others are emerging to deliver, and these others are being instrumentalized.

My best answer to you as someone who knows Mali is that it is imperative that we help the Malian government become responsible in its governance and become more capable, because that is the only way in which we can stop Mali from becoming another Afghanistan.

● (0935)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: How are these insurgents in the north, who are providing these resources to the people there, being funded? Where are they getting their money from to do this?

Dr. Marie-Joëlle Zahar: There's a lot of criminality and transnational networks. Mali is on the route for smuggling contraband and drugs to Europe. There is a connection—and a difficulty related to the connection—between criminality and otherwise political groups, but it's part of people trying to get resources where there are no other resources to be found.

At the negotiating table, many of these groups ask the government to become the border police so that they could actually have stable jobs and move their people away from criminality. To me, that is the best sign that they are serious. Sadly, that was not an option accepted by the current government, but this doesn't mean that there isn't the potential. There is a potential in the country for these groups to be taken out of this bigger constellation of Islamist terrorist groups that have been operating elsewhere as well.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you.

The Chair: MP Garrison is next.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Thanks very much, Mr. Chair, and thanks very much to the witnesses. I'll try to resist the temptation to testify myself, and I want to reassure the witnesses that the phrasing of our study doesn't necessarily indicate the title of our study. The motion may in fact evolve, based on the testimony we're hearing, and it was my motion, which was moved a year and a half ago. Things have been moving very rapidly.

I want to focus my questions on Professor Zahar, because I know she has to leave shortly. I want to follow up on some of the things Ms. Gallant was asking about.

I would start by asking why the UN mission is the best to tackle situations such as Mali. How does it have advantages over other things that are going on, such as the counter-insurgency mission or the G5 Sahel?

Dr. Marie-Joëlle Zahar: As briefly as possible, it's because the missions are not just about military. They recognize and work on the connections among insecurity, governance problems, and development problems. It's because in spite of the fact that everyone criticizes the UN, including Malian actors, when you get them in a room and talk to them, they will recognize that the UN doesn't have the kinds of direct interest that other countries have in a specific outcome in Mali beyond just peace and security.

Algeria negotiated the agreement because, to put it bluntly, the Algerians didn't want to see another insurgency at their border. Once they started being concerned with Libya, their concern was to finish quickly with Mali so that they could turn to Libya. That haste is part of the reason we have an agreement that is half-baked.

In other words, no one except the UN, if funded and supported, actually has the interest and the willingness to stay the course. Other countries either achieve their interests or move away. It seems to me it is because of this that the UN continues to be the best bet. It's also because the UN is the only place where all of the other countries with interests can actually come to talk.

The UN is thus the place where G5 Sahel members or the French or whoever sort out their differences and reach agreements. We saw this when the UN initially did not want to back the G5 Sahel force; then there were discussions in the corridors and there was some backing provided.

The UN continues to be the place where the various actors with specific national interests can actually talk to one another. No other organization or actor can provide that kind of convening power.

● (0940)

Mr. Randall Garrison: People we've had before the committee and others involved in the discussions about Mali say that there is no peace to keep. All of you made reference challenging that notion.

I guess I'll start with Professor Zahar and then let the other two chime in on that question. Is there a peace to keep?

Dr. Marie-Joëlle Zahar: It is fragile. There have been improvements in the last couple of months. That is after two years of difficult implementation of the peace process, but there have been substantial improvements in the last couple of months.

There are challenges that are not necessarily related to the political actors of the conflict but to the emergence of new actors, particularly in the centre of Mali. Is it a situation of post-conflict? No, it's not, but no UN peacekeeping peace mission was really a full situation of post-conflict. Hybridity is the nature of the situations into which the UN deploys. Going back to what Carolyn said earlier, otherwise we would not need deployments. We deploy in places because there are needs and because without the deployment, the slide back to insecurity and open warfare is a real possibility.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Ms. McAskie, would you comment?

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: Your question is a very good example of why using the word "peacekeeping" lets us fall into a bit of a trap. If we're only going to go once there's a peace, why are we going?

The modern-day concept of peace operations is to help create the peace environment and, as long as we continue to call the military arm the peacekeepers, to bring in the peacekeepers to ensure that security is available to create the environment for peace discussions and provide the security to enable the participants to come to the table.

Right now there is a fragile peace to keep, but around the edges it's pretty messy. Those are, as Marie-Joëlle has explained graphically, unfortunate characteristics of current conflicts.

Is there a peace to keep? That's not the question, as far as I'm concerned.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Professor Dorn, would you comment? Just don't make eye contact with the chair.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Prof. Walter Dorn: Mali is not Afghanistan. It's not a war zone. MINUSMA is not a counterterrorism mission. There is some peace to keep. There is a peace process that should be upheld. There are child soldiers who need to be rescued.

What we need are the types of skills we saw from the Toronto police officer on Friday, whereby we can go into situations and de-escalate them.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Zahar, I'm sensitive to your time issues, and this is a fascinating panel, so unless I can convince you to stay, I....

Dr. Marie-Joëlle Zahar: I wish I could stay. I would actually offend your colleagues at Global Affairs, who are waiting for me.

The Chair: I'm going to suspend for two seconds because I'd like to say goodbye, and then we'll resume in about 60 seconds.

● _____ (Pause) _____

■

● (0945)

The Chair: Welcome back.

We have one last seven-minute question. I'm going to give the floor to MP Robillard.

The floor is yours.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses.

Ms. McAskie, as the former special representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, can you tell me what types and level of resources and personnel the United Nations needs most from Canada for peacekeeping operations?

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: That is either a difficult question or a rather easy one. One could say that the United Nations is in need of everything, whether it is in Mali, the headquarters in New York, or elsewhere.

For starters, I believe that the UN needs properly trained armed forces, like Canada's armed forces. I believe that the Canadian Armed Forces would be an extraordinary asset to the United Nations. That almost goes without saying.

Personally, I would also say that the United Nations needs Canada's policy and development analysis capacity, given the longstanding relationship between Mali and Canada. Canada knows a lot about Mali's history and its current situation. I believe that we should seek out those types of people to offer their services to the UN. They could work in key positions, not only as part of a Canadian mission, but also as part of the UN mission. I think it is very important for the UN mission to have access to people with extensive experience, many years of experience, and we have that. That is very important.

I would like to add a third point, which my colleague Walter Dorn mentioned in his remarks. There are no Canadians in the Office of Military Affairs, in UN peacekeeping operations, in New York. That is something that should be remedied. The fact that we have no one in that office means that we do not have an opportunity to contribute to mission development, long-term planning, or support for field missions. As Ms. Gallant was saying, this impacts chain of command issues. We cannot criticize problems within the chain of command if we do not have anyone in the chain of command. We therefore need Canadians in the chain of command. That could also give us access to privileged information.

Those are the three things that I think are most important.

Mr. Yves Robillard: Thank you.

My next question is for either of you.

What types of reforms— administrative, institutional, political, financial, or other—are needed to ensure the effectiveness and success of the UN's peacekeeping architecture?

● (0950)

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: I'm sorry, but I'm not even going to try to answer that question. I retired from the UN in 2008. I do somewhat follow what is happening with UN files by talking to my colleagues, but you will be hearing from a senior UN representative and I think he will be able to provide you with a better update.

All that I can say is that the UN's peacekeeping process has evolved rapidly and dramatically over the past three decades. The UN is very aware of what needs to be done, but it lacks government support and resources.

I cannot give you any information about administrative or financial reforms. However, I can tell you that the UN always needs more money.

Prof. Walter Dorn: I think that the UN also needs Canadian leaders, like Ms. McAskie.

With regard to reforms, there is a lack of capacity in a number of areas. I work in technology in peacekeeping, and I hope that Canada will be able to help. There is a conference coming up in Berlin in three weeks, and I hope that Canada will send a representative.

With regarding to financing, there is a major need for voluntary funds for countries and for rapid deployment. Countries need to be able to send troops after one or two months, not after a year or two.

Mr. Yves Robillard: Given that UN Security Council resolutions establishing peacekeeping mandates are often carried out by organizations other than the UN, such as the African Union operation in Somalia or the NATO mission in Afghanistan, are other organizations more effective at carrying out Security Council mandates in some situations? If so, why?

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: Once again, it depends on the situation.

I can give you an excellent example of my experience in Burundi. Remember, I was there in 2004, when the UN mission was launched and the Security Council resolution was passed. However, the process was initiated by the former president of Tanzania, whose name escapes me at the moment. No wait. Now I remember. His name was Julius Nyerere. I don't know how I could have forgotten that because he is one of my heroes. He was the leader of a country like Tanzania and he decided that peace was the most important thing. He welcomed hundreds of thousands of refugees from Rwanda and Burundi to his country. After handing his authority over to his successor, he initiated the peace process for Rwanda and Burundi. That continued for 10 or 15 years. It was the African regional group's support for the peace process that really put pressure on Burundi in a way that the UN was unable to do.

Other organizations therefore have a role to play. The UN is central, but the support of countries in the region is vital. It is impossible to continue without it.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you for that.

We'll go to five-minute questions now.

MP Alleslev, the floor is yours.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Thank you very much for being here.

I would like to leverage some of the things you have already said. Probably the most significant one is around understanding where our contribution could be, not only on missions but in staff-type functions.

Could you expand a little bit on that—what areas, at what level? What would you recommend, and how do we advocate for it?

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: He's the expert.

● (0955)

Prof. Walter Dorn: What has changed in peacekeeping since traditional peacekeeping is the expansion of mandates, which means that you need all kinds of people who have skills in those areas. If you're dealing with nation-building or security sector reform, you not only need to reform the military and the police but to deal with the courts. You even need to deal with the intelligence agencies of the government.

That requires specialized capacity, and that's where our reservists can help, because from their regular jobs they may bring in skills. That's why we need to do specialized training for these kinds of activities, with the wide range of mandates the UN is giving.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Would those be in New York? I'm talking about the structural strategic level, not only the level of being deployed on specific missions.

Prof. Walter Dorn: We need to strengthen the United Nations in New York. It expanded fivefold from the heady days of the early 1990s with DPKO, now the Department of Field Support, but there is a need for much more support.

I view New York as being understaffed, under-resourced, underfinanced. I worked there for the last year, and there are so many initiatives that people would love to do, but they just don't have the resources and personnel to do them.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: What's the barrier to Canada's contributing to those staff positions in New York?

Prof. Walter Dorn: The Canadian government has been taking so much time thinking about how it might contribute and not acting, not doing it. My view is that if you started acting in small steps, you'd be able to find new openings to do larger ones. We have to apply for some of the military posts in New York as well.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Okay. If I could take this into a slightly bigger philosophical question, we really have been talking about our role in the world and why the stability of the international interest is in our own self-interest. In that regard, are we measured somewhat by the relative contribution we make? Do we have a responsibility to play in the international domain relative to our weight or our desired perspective? How would you evaluate that, based on where we are today?

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: Well, you have to remember that I come from the generation of public servants who talked a lot about punching above your weight. I spent 40 years in development, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, the humanitarian side, international negotiations, the international development banks, the UN. Canada was a leader all the time.

That meant that we were able to shape the agenda. We shaped the agenda because we showed up and we took responsibility.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: And today...?

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: Today I know of a highly competent Canadian who's had a full-time career in the UN, and during the time of the previous Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, he was told he was not going to get the SRSG job because Canada was not doing anything to support the effort.

We lost out on placing competent Canadians in the mission. They've stopped asking us to provide military leaders and political leaders, and we're not at the table. If we're not at the table, we cannot influence the negotiations.

I've sat through midnight at UN negotiations for longer than I care to remember.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Could you give me a feel for the gap? Do we go back to where we were, at 1995 levels? I too came from that era, and that's my perception of punching above our weight. It's more than we are doing today. How do we judge what the appropriate level is?

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: It's partly numerical, but it's also qualitative and quantitative. You have to be at the table, but if you're at the table at the UN Development Programme budget committee and you're the fifth-largest donor, it's different from being the 15th-largest donor.

Our contributions to development efforts have gone down and down, and we're just not seen as a player. Our diplomats on the ground still do a fabulous job, but they are constrained by the fact that they don't have the resources to back up their influence.

I do not know how we are going to win the vote for the Security Council in the next round. I just do not know. I don't know what the campaign is; I'm not part of it.

● (1000)

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Thank you very much.

The Chair: MP Yurdiga is next.

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

These are troubling times. Things have mutated over time. Peacekeeping is no longer peacekeeping. It's a hybrid between peacekeeping and counterterrorism. That's a challenge.

I think training should be focused on training. I'm really concerned about countries such as Ethiopia, India, and Pakistan. I'm not quite sure whether they're training in counterterrorism, as our Canadian soldiers are. They are very well trained, and everybody's proud of what we can do. We punch above our weight in every single situation.

Should we be focusing more on training other countries in dealing with counterterrorism and, in that respect, with the ethics of military operations? We have seen in peacekeeping missions in the past that many times troops drop weapons and leave.

Prof. Walter Dorn: I've visited the Indian and Pakistani units. I've worked with their officers and I think they're very fine. Ethiopia has some major experience in combat and in peacekeeping over the decades. In many ways, those countries have surpassed Canada in terms of knowledge about how peacekeeping works.

If people are going to be deployed on peace operations, I don't think we should be training them as counterterrorists. We made that mistake in Somalia. We deployed the Airborne Regiment. Our country suffered a terribly maligned reputation as a result of the misactions of some of those soldiers in the Airborne Regiment, and we disbanded that regiment.

If you try to conflate counterterrorism with peace operations, you will create situations in which the soldiers will not react properly, escalating rather than de-escalating the situation and making it worse.

Mr. David Yurdiga: Thank you.

The problem I have is that we have the French troops on the ground with the G5 Sahel performing counterterrorism activities. There's active engagement on the ground. Now we have the UN there. Are the roles different? What is the UN actually doing at this point, on the ground? Everybody understands that they are targeted by everyone on the opposite side. What is the UN's role currently?

Prof. Walter Dorn: The UN role is to support a peace process and to do a wide range of activities, from protection of civilians to human rights to child protection. Operation Barkhane, led by the French, is a counterterrorism mission, and so is the G5 Sahel. It's important to keep those missions separate, because otherwise the terrorist-armed groups may say that it's all one unit, and they will attack the soft underbelly: those who are providing humanitarian assistance, those who are working for the UN on development. They have to see that there are separate initiatives going on. There's overlap, but those missions have to be kept separate. It's definitely a separate role.

Mr. David Yurdiga: Is there communication between the UN and the French? Obviously there are two different roles, and we don't want to get in the way of their operation. Is there communication between the two, and are we assisting the French?

Prof. Walter Dorn: There is communication. The French also have soldiers in the MINUSMA mission, so they're quite aware of what's going on. There are times when MINUSMA personnel may need to be rescued by French forces. They share some resources together, and their communication is essential. It's just that the roles should be viewed differently, and they actually are quite different.

Mr. David Yurdiga: The Mali borders are very porous. How important is it to secure the borders? Is it even possible? We have actors outside Mali who are going in, performing operations, and then leaving. Is it even possible to secure the borders?

Prof. Walter Dorn: It's not possible to completely secure the borders, particularly in a country like Mali, with those wide-open desert areas, but you can do a better job. That's why I was in Mali in January, looking at how unmanned aerial vehicles can be used in that mission.

● (1005)

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: Just to add, there hasn't been any reference to the consequences of how we managed the Libya operation. By "we" I mean the broader international community.

The fact of the matter is that a certain amount of the Malian conflict has been fuelled by the massive influx of armaments that were suddenly available after the international community declared victory in Libya, complete with a flypast, and then refused to accept a UN proposal that Libya be the object of a comprehensive mission that might—although I don't know, because it's counterfactual—have prevented this immense exodus of arms that has fuelled the conflict in northern Mali.

Here's another reason that we have to step up to the bar. We have to look at what we're doing and not doing all around the world and connect the dots. We did half a job in Libya, and now we're reaping the consequences. I'm talking about the greater "we". I'm not just talking about Canada, but we were a big part of the Libyan operation. Then that was it. It was all over: "Boy, that was a good job. Let's go home." Now we're reaping the consequences.

There's tremendous interconnectedness. Mali is the result of underdevelopment, environmental degradation, and ethnic groups being manipulated by the terrorist groups. It's very complicated in that sense, but we can understand what's happening. We can also look back and say we didn't do enough in the past. It's time to step up now and fix it.

The Chair: Before I go to MP Fisher, let me say that there will be time for additional questions. In the next five or six minutes, then, just get my attention or the clerk's if you want another question, and I'll work it out to make sure everyone has an opportunity.

Go ahead, MP Fisher.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Thank you very much for being here.

It's an absolutely fascinating discussion. I think I said during the break that I thank you for your bluntness. This is what we need to hear. I for one am learning so much from some of the comments you're making.

What I'm interested in and have been interested in also in our previous panels on this discussion comes down to the whole question of what peacekeeping is today and the way it has changed.

Carolyn, you said peacekeeping has drastically changed and really hasn't been peacekeeping since the Cold War. I'm thinking about the evolution of peacekeeping from the Cold War to when we pulled out of peacekeeping to today. You used some lines, and I hope I don't attribute anything to you that may have been said by the previous witness, but—

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: I don't mind taking credit.

Mr. Darren Fisher: "We have no choice; re-engaging is a necessity. It's still the best way."

"We have to step up to the bar."

"We deploy because there is a need."

Those are important comments that were made by, I think, all three of you.

Now that we see the changes in peacekeeping and see that it may not actually even be peacekeeping now, I think Canadians as a whole and maybe citizens around the world as a whole still see it as they did back in the Cold War, or previous to the 2000s, anyway: they still see it as blue berets. They still see it as perhaps a neutral force between two warring factions.

I'm interested in both of your takes on how we get this out into the public so that they see the change, see the difference, so that they don't just think of peacekeeping the way I was brought up to think of peacekeeping.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: Well, I think you need to get the media on the line. The media is still bringing to the table people who are talking about what happened 20 years ago, and that's what shapes what people think.

I've been following this in the media. In fact, I have with me Bob Fowler's article in *The Globe and Mail* from a couple of weeks ago. I felt like just sending it in and saying, "Here's my submission." You need more people like that speaking up.

The Canadian public is perfectly capable of understanding complexity if you present it. There's no reason that all of you can't have events in your various ridings. Talk to people and talk to the media.

There's a recent opinion poll survey that Environics or one of those companies just put out, a major study of Canadian attitudes over the last 10 years. Canadians still define themselves as interested in the international community, interested in what's happening in the greater world, and they are assuming that Canada will play its part.

It's up to the government now and the Commons as a whole—all parties—to convey to Canadians that we have to play a more complex role because it's a more complex world. I think Canadians will buy that.

● (1010)

Mr. Darren Fisher: Mr. Dorn, I'll give you the remainder of the time, but you tied exactly to what Carolyn just said about Canada's identity being tied to peacekeeping. Again I apologize if I'm paraphrasing and taking some of your words out of context, but that is what I took from one your statements: that part of our identity is tied to what Canadians envision peacekeeping to be.

Do you want to finish off on—?

Prof. Walter Dorn: Sure.

I give a whole lecture on the evolution of peacekeeping. I'll submit to the committee a figure that will give you a good view of how you can view peacekeeping as part of peace operations as a whole—peacemaking, humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, peace enforcement. That's NATO-Canadian doctrine that's well established.

Concerning our identity, yes, we have a country that identifies with peacekeeping. It's shown in the polls. The last $10 bill had a woman peacekeeper with a blue beret underneath a banner that said "*Au service de la paix*—In the service of peace." We have many great service people in francophone countries, where we have unique capabilities. We have a multicultural background and can make a contribution that's different from that of our American neighbours, a way by which we can show that we have a distinct identity in the world.

Mr. Darren Fisher: That's perfect. Thank you.

The Chair: MP Bezan is next.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): I welcome both of our witnesses to the committee—again, in Mr. Dorn's case, of course.

I was listening intently to what you've been saying in talking about what Canadians think. What they think and what reality is in UN missions today are quite different things. There's still that nostalgic view of the blue helmet or blue beret, which Professor Dorn was just talking about. The reality of the risk factors facing them on the ground in a mission such as Mali....

I agree that comparing Mali with Afghanistan may not be the right option, but Canadians, especially our veterans, also remember Rwanda and Somalia and the difficulties we experienced there. There is apprehension on the ground that we all face in our ridings. We don't have the luxury of always being in the Ottawa bubble or sitting behind a desk in a government office or teaching our class at university. We have to face the voter, and there is a concern about this particular mission and about peacekeeping in general. Roméo Dallaire's book added more understanding about the bureaucracy and red tape at the UN, which works not necessarily in collaboration with a proper chain of command when conducting a military operation.

First and foremost, this is a discretionary mission, as all missions are, other than an article 5 mission under NATO. We had General Lewis MacKenzie here on Tuesday, and he talked about the discretionary factor.

Ms. McAskie, you just mentioned that there are still problems within the UN, that they're under-resourced and understaffed in carrying out the mandate of all the various missions the UN undertakes. Can we say with confidence to Canadians that when we are moving troops and civil servants into harm's way on these missions, we are making sure the threats and risks they're facing are mitigated to the best of Canada's ability?

Prof. Walter Dorn: I think we can. The Canadian Armed Forces has a chain of command. The chief of the defence staff never loses his command of the forces in the field, and they take very thorough precautions to ensure that the men and women in uniform are adequately protected.

In Mali the fatality rates are less than one-third of what Canada experienced in Afghanistan. There was a 1% chance of dying per year over the 10-year period in Afghanistan. For the Mali mission as a whole, the fatality rate is 0.3%, and most of those deaths are of Chadians and African troops. The western forces have very few fatalities—I think nine—and of those, you can number on one hand the number who died under malicious attack. In terms of malicious attack in Mali, then, the risk levels are quite tolerable.

● (1015)

Mr. James Bezan: The base where Canadians are going to be stationed in Mali is at Gao. The Germans are there right now. It has faced attack. What are the stats around that particular base?

Prof. Walter Dorn: I have been in Gao. I was there in January and I was there in July last year. Yes, Gao has been attacked. I'm not aware of any fatalities as a result of those attacks. Even when I was there in January, I could hear gunfire in the distance.

Most of the time, most of the people in these towns are safe, and the super-camp in Gao is very well protected. I've been in the German compound. The measures are excellent.

I've documented the use of counter-RAM—that's "counter-rockets, artillery, mortar"—radars that the UN has contracted, I have looked at the Swedish and the German radars that are being used, and I've documented cases in which lives were saved because of the use of technology in the mission.

Mr. James Bezan: Ms. McAskie, you talked about what has happened in Libya. You also mentioned Afghanistan. After a NATO-type mission or a coalition mission such as we've seen in Libya, Iraq, or Afghanistan, is there a role to which the UN should have been stepping up to do follow-up, to ensure that there was stability and peace after the military mission had partially wrapped up? If so, why didn't it happen?

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: Definitely, but again I go back to the very first point I made in my general intervention: that the UN is us. Is there a role for the UN? Yes, there was a proposal on the table in Libya, after the military intervention, for there to be a comprehensive peace mission to go in and secure the area, and members weren't interested. It never made it through the Security Council. I don't know the exact details.

As I said, I'm retired, which is why I can be blunt, as Mr. Fisher says. Retirement is the most liberating thing.

The Chair: Thank you for the response.

I'm going to move over to MP Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Professor Dorn, in one of our previous meetings we were talking about the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, which was closed in 2013. In doing some research, I came across an article in iPolitics dating back to April 2016 that reported that the non-governmental organization named CANADEM called for the reopening of the training centre. Have you heard of this organization? Do you know anything about their reputation?

Prof. Walter Dorn: Sure. They're headed by Paul LaRose-Edwards. They're on Nicholas Street. Their primary funding now is coming from the British government. They help provide civilians from not only Canada but countries around the world to international organizations to serve on missions. I've been asked at least a dozen times by CANADEM to deploy on mission.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I also found a report that you co-authored in February 2016, and you had a number of recommendations in there. The third recommendation spoke specifically to the opening of the new peace operations training centre for civilians, military, and police. Can you elaborate a little bit on the importance of that?

Prof. Walter Dorn: Currently we don't have a place where military, police, and civilians can get together and do education and training together. We have the Peace Support Training Centre in your riding, but it's so important that the military get exposed to the other components of peace operations and that they learn to work under civilian control. Unlike NATO missions, UN missions are civilian-led. Carolyn led one of the previous peacekeeping operations. We need to be able to increase the military's awareness of working with civilians, including police, and also international civilians.

We're really lacking in the capacity to do operational- and strategic-level education on peace operations.

● (1020)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: When you say we need to increase the military's awareness, is this different from the situation a few decades ago?

Prof. Walter Dorn: One of the recommendations of the Somali inquiry was that Canada needed to better train its forces. It was one of the brutal lessons from the Somali debacle. The Pearson Peacekeeping Centre and the PSTC, the Peace Support Training Centre, were created as a result of that hard-learned lesson, and it seems to me we have forgotten that lesson and we have to get back to it.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Do you have any idea what the cost would be of reopening a training centre like that? I think you quoted a number in that study. Is it the same? I think you were at between $10 million and $20 million, if I remember.

Prof. Walter Dorn: I think that would be an accurate estimate, yes.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: That would be between $10 million and $20 million.

Do you have any sense as to where the best location for it would be?

Prof. Walter Dorn: I think you're going to be happy with the answer. Kingston is actually a good area because—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Oh, good.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Objection, Mr. Chair. He's leading the witness.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Prof. Walter Dorn: —it's close enough to Ottawa but far enough away. It already has the Peace Support Training Centre. There are facilities, for instance, in Fort Frontenac that could be used. I've taught there at the Command and Staff College for the army. You need to be fairly close to an airport. One of the problems with the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre in Cornwallis was that it took almost three hours to get from the airport to the centre.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Does CANADEM have the same feeling?

Prof. Walter Dorn: Yes, they're also in favour of that location.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I just want to go to—

Sure, go ahead, Ms. McAskie.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: I would just say that I might have a slight disagreement with Walter on the location of it.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: That's good; I don't need to hear it.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: We moved from Cornwallis to Ottawa because we needed the Ottawa connection.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Okay, thank you.

Going back to these graphs that you had, you show that in 2006 we suddenly dropped in terms of our personnel. Why? I know it's really easy, because we have the prime ministers up there to blame, Harper specifically, but is there an underlying reason? Did peace support and peacekeeping change a lot, or did the way that we do these missions change? Did they turn more diplomatic and less "boots on the ground"?

Prof. Walter Dorn: No. The peace operations of the UN stayed the same. What changed was Canada's engagement in Afghanistan. When we were moving into Kandahar, we had 200 logisticians in UNDOF, the UN Disengagement Observer Force, in the Golan Heights of Syria, and we needed those logisticians for other operations.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: You can have the last formal question, MP Garrison.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

Of course, on the location of the centre, I'm not going to suggest Esquimalt.

I think one of the things that have been important about our contributions, which we've heard repeatedly, is that Canada has that bilingual and bicultural aspect.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: Very much so.

Mr. Randall Garrison: I was going to ask Ms. McAskie about the importance of that aspect of our contributions.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: I think I can tell you right away that out of my international civilians in Burundi, the largest number were Senegalese and the second-highest number were Canadians. These were Canadian individuals who'd worked their way up through the UN or who had sought positions in that mission particularly.

I should add here that having been an assistant deputy minister in the Government of Canada before joining the United Nations, I will say that my seniors in the United Nations, when I was appointed to Burundi, assumed that there would be support from Canada for the mission. I made several trips to Ottawa and talked to the defence department. I talked to Global Affairs—whatever it was called at the time, I forget—and CIDA, where I knew people personally and where I was able to explain what was going on and to ask for assistance.

I'll tell you what I got: zero. I didn't get a single staff officer. I didn't get a single penny or an increase in development, and I didn't get any more political support except from the odd visit of the nearest mission in Kenya.

With regard to Canadians who served, yes, Canadians are sought because they're bilingual, but they're not backed up by their government. I'm sorry about that, but that's the hard fact.

Mr. Randall Garrison: That's good.

I have very limited time in this round. I want to ask you about the Folke Bernadotte Institute and why it's your favourite as a possible model for Canada. We're thinking about re-establishing a training centre.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: I keep prefacing my remarks by saying I'm a little bit out of date, which means I'll probably never get invited back again, but there are a number of models, either independent institutions or ones that work closely with government but at arm's length. What I've found the Folke Bernadotte Institute had over some of the others—including, up to a point, our own—was that they could draw on government resources for expertise much more easily than an independent organization could, so you would find that the people in the organization or on their boards or in the field were—not entirely, but in many instances—staff members who were rotated out of defence or foreign affairs or civil society.

I don't know if you are familiar with the extent to which civil society and government work much more closely in the Scandinavian countries. You can meet the minister of development for co-operation one day, and then he or she is the head of the NGO because the government has changed. With their small population, there is much more intermixing, and what you'd find there is that you have access to tremendous experience. They do it well, too.

● (1025)

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Given that people have indicated to me they want questions, I have MPs Spengemann, Bezan, Garrison, and Alleslev in the time available. I'll give those members, in that order, four minutes each, but I want to take a quick one before we move to that.

I don't get to talk lots; I get to listen. It seems to me that all three of you are very supportive of Canada's engagement in Mali. Professor Dorn has tried to quantify the risk level, because that's going to be an ongoing question. To be very decisive and definitive, I'd like to ask each of you to state whether you are for or against Canada's involvement in Mali and why you think it's important. If you could do that in 60 seconds or less, I'd appreciate it.

I'll ask Ms. McAskie first.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: I'm very supportive of Canada going into Mali.

First of all, I'm supportive of our getting into peacekeeping, and given that we need to make one choice, it's better to make one choice than to have a scattered approach and do a little bit here, there, and everywhere. We have to have enough focus to make a difference.

Mali is a partner of long date. We are friends with Mali. We need to support them. We have let them down in the past by pulling away. They are our friends. They deserve our help.

Second, the Sahel is an explosive area as a result of the growing environmental degradation and growing poverty. We have allowed that to happen, and that's what creates fertile ground for terrorism. Studies have been done over decades on the clear link between conflict and poor development, poor governance, environmental degradation, poverty, etc. The Sahel is a classic case, and the international community has to come together to address it in the broadest sense.

It's not just a question of putting in some helicopters and a few troops. It's a question of standing back and looking at a region in the world that will have an enormous impact on global health and security.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Mr. Dorn, could you also in your remarks just again quantify your expert opinion on the level of risk? I know you mentioned it earlier, but that's a big question and people keep asking it, so I'd like your opinion on that, please.

Prof. Walter Dorn: Sure. To put it in 60 seconds, I'm in favour. I think we should be doing more. We should deploy a quick-reaction force, and we're looking for a place to do that. I think that Mali corresponds with both our values and our interests. Mali is a long-standing democracy that's faced challenges, including a *coup d'état*. We've had long-standing partnerships with the country, including military training. We also have interests in terms of mining and other commercial interests, and we have to, as Carolyn said, de-escalate the terrorist threat in that country.

As for the risks, there have been 166 fatalities in Mali from the MINUSMA mission. The vast majority of those have been from the developing world. Roughly half have been from malicious attacks, and those are the ones we're perhaps most fearful of. The majority of those malicious attacks were against troops from the developing world.

There were helicopters in Mali provided by the Dutch and Germans, and each of them had accidents. The German Tiger helicopter crash killed two people. The Dutch Apache helicopter crash killed two people. Those were accidents; they were not from malicious attacks.

At the present time there are no known surface-to-air missile threats. They have not been used against aircraft, and, knock on wood, they won't be.

● (1030)

The Chair: Are you saying that threat is very low?

Prof. Walter Dorn: I'd assess the threat as moderate at this time, but unpredictable.

The Chair: Mr. Spengemann is next.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Chair, thank you very much.

Ms. McAskie, I'd like to take you back to the issue of post-conflict reconstruction. I'm going to take a moment just to frame the question. Your co-panellist Ms. Zahar talked about it in the context of Mali. I want to take you to the context of Iraq and put to you the proposition that a good factor in the emergence of ISIS was ISIS's unconstrained ability to provide public goods and services, or what was essentially perceived by the population to be public goods and services. In other words, it was replacing government. ISIS is and was a non-state actor, and I'm wondering if you could comment on the importance of post-conflict reconstruction work led by the UN, the expedience of it, and the advance planning of it. Sometimes we have to start it when conflict is still going on.

Then there's the wretched decision as to when you should withdraw militarily and devolve on to a nascent or renascent government. The Obama administration, in a very politically defensible way, decided to pull its troops back at the end of 2011. Things were stable, but then you had these decentralized governorates in Iraq that were unable to deliver the services that ISIS then provided.

How important is PCR, post-conflict reconstruction, and how do we integrate it into our thinking on peace operations?

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: You're absolutely right to consider peacebuilding to be something that starts right from the very beginning. My last job in the UN was as assistant secretary-general supporting the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission.

My definition of peacebuilding is that it starts long before the peace process. It continues through the peace operations and peacekeeping and on into post-conflict and on into development. You have to have an approach to everything you do that takes into account the elements we need to address in order to ensure long-term peace.

With regard to Iraq, of course the Iraq mission was so enormous that it sort of exceeded the ability of the international community to encompass all of these elements. You're absolutely right that there have been many instances in the past in which the local population, because they're cut off from government services, rely on local groups, maybe terrorist or rebel groups, to supply basic services. This is true in Palestine and Gaza. It's true in other parts of the world.

The issue here is for the international community to come together around the table. That's what the Peacebuilding Commission was supposed to provide, a place where everybody was at the table and you could define strategies for peacebuilding. Our first two clients were Burundi and Sierra Leone. We had great strategies, and then the international community didn't fund them. Then in Sierra Leone, you had the Ebola crisis. Part of the strategy was rebuilding the health sector, rebuilding the justice sector, and rebuilding the education sector. That didn't happen, and they weren't able to deal with the Ebola crisis.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: To briefly follow up, how constrained are we ideologically by what's still floating around as the mantra that we don't do nation-building? Is that still an obstacle, or are we now at a point where, yes, we're doing nation-building, but we just have to do it in the right way?

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: I'm not sure what the current discourse is in the Security Council on nation-building. Certainly the trend has been towards fostering local elements and supporting local elements. Even in Afghanistan, a lot of the emphasis was put on supporting the new government there, and there was definitely an amount of nation-building.

My understanding is that the terminology has gone out of favour, but maybe not the concept. These countries need enormous help in reconstituting their basic public structures.

The Chair: Thank you.

MP Bezan is next.

Mr. James Bezan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. McAskie, you said we haven't done anything in Mali, but I thought we were one of the major contributors of humanitarian aid, contributing tens of millions of dollars over the last while.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: No, I never said we haven't done anything; we just haven't gone in formally in a peace operation.

Mr. James Bezan: That's in a peace operation, but I think overall that Canada has been committed to helping Mali.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: No, we are present. We have an aid program in Mali. We contribute to the humanitarian efforts, absolutely. I'm sorry to have misled you. That's a good clarification. Thank you.

● (1035)

Mr. James Bezan: Okay, I thought the way it came across.... I wanted to make sure you had a chance to correct the record.

Professor Dorn, you talked about the Airborne Regiment in Somalia and the disaster there. You kind of said that we shouldn't be sending combat troops in to do peacekeeping, but as far as I know, in relation to the Airborne Regiment, there's still the whole question around mefloquine and the way it may have had an effect on the psychotic episodes that were experienced there and the tragedy that resulted.

Also, when did we stop training our troops to be combat soldiers?

Prof. Walter Dorn: I don't think we've ever stopped our troops from doing combat.

Mr. James Bezan: They're always combat first. They do peacekeeping as a side job, as part of their overall training.

Prof. Walter Dorn: What we have lost is the training that's specifically for the UN. We do far less of it and we have far less experience.

Mr. James Bezan: I was looking at your graph, Professor, on the level of peacekeeping. It was fairly stable, although there are reduced numbers from what we experienced back in the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s. Since we had Prime Minister Trudeau host the peacekeeping convention in Vancouver, the numbers have dropped dramatically. Would you characterize that as embarrassing?

Prof. Walter Dorn: I am personally embarrassed by that. When I go to the UN headquarters, sometimes I feel that I have to apologize. I'm very sorry, but when I was in the field speaking to UN officials, one of them said it has become kind of a joke that the Canadians are coming. We take lots of time from UN officials. We take them from the jobs in which they're trying to save people's lives and we've sent so many delegations to Africa, but we haven't deployed and we're now at a near all-time low in peacekeeping.

Mr. James Bezan: In your opening comments, you characterized that as dithering and delaying. Originally the promise was 600 peacekeepers and 150 police officers. Then it went down to 250 and six helicopters. Do you have any insight as to why there's this continued ongoing debate within the government, why this hasn't happened, and why the numbers keep changing?

Prof. Walter Dorn: You'd have to ask cabinet members.

Mr. James Bezan: I'm looking at whether you have any intel. I'm not getting anything from the MPs.

Prof. Walter Dorn: Well, one of my concerns is that we're not even at the levels that had been approved by previous governments in the current missions. We're in five missions now, and we're not even at the levels that we could have deployed at in those missions, so we're not gaining any experience. It seems to me that various levels of government could be responsible for not fully deploying our forces.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: May I comment?

The Chair: There are a couple of seconds left. Go ahead, please.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: This will be another one of my blunt interventions, Mr. Fisher.

My understanding, from conversations I've had over the years with colleagues from the military and the Department of National Defence—and I'm going to really stick my neck out here—is that the Canadian military doesn't want to work with the UN. They preferred to work with NATO, but when they came out of Afghanistan, they found that NATO wasn't necessarily all it was cracked up to be—but then, what is?—and that their preferred partner is our friends to the south. Politically, that's not exactly good optics for Canada, especially these days, but the underlying message that I get is they're not interested. My sense is that the Minister of National Defence has had a difficult time with his generals dragging their feet.

You can quote me, but I can't quote you chapter and verse. It's just my gut feeling. That's what you asked for.

The Chair: I know I said four minutes each, but we have only about five minutes left, so I will yield the floor to Mr. Garrison.

If you would be so kind as to provide a little bit of time for your colleague, I would appreciate that.

Mr. Randall Garrison: We'll see.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Randall Garrison: Again, this has been a very valuable panel for us. One of the things I did to prepare for it was to look at Professor Dorn's "Unprepared for Peace? The Decline of Canadian Peacekeeping Training (and What to Do About It)". Can I ask for that report to be tabled with the committee so it can become a formal part of our deliberations?

I'm going to ask both of you this question.

In that report, you made the statement, "The loss of CAF experience in the field since 2005 carries a high price". Then you went on to talk a little bit about that, Professor Dorn, in the sense of asking what it is that's in our national interest that we're not getting as a result of our failure to participate, since that's what we're talking about here.

● (1040)

Prof. Walter Dorn: The high price is that we are not as familiar with the United Nations as we could be, so when we go into those missions, we do not have all the knowledge we need to network effectively in that system. We have paid a high price because we're no longer providing the leadership at the military level. We had six force commanders in the 1990s and we've had none since, so we don't have the international visibility we had. We're paying a high price because we want to train others in peacekeeping, but we don't have the experience ourselves, so we cannot claim to be the experts in peacekeeping.

The Pearson Peacekeeping Centre was the founding Institution for the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres. We were the leaders in peacekeeping training for over a decade, and we've lost that, so that's part of the high price.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Ms. McAskie, would you comment?

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: I think on the more nebulous side, because influence is very hard to quantify, we have very much lost our place at the table. Officially the government will say that's not true, but the feedback I get from colleagues in the UN is that they are very disappointed. They did not know what had happened to Canada during the previous government and they had welcomed the current government as the one that was going to fix it. They're still waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Great. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Garrison.

The last question goes to MP Alleslev.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Thank you very much.

You mentioned a report or a spectrum that you have on peacekeeping. Could you provide that to us so that we could look at peace enforcement versus peace, just so we have that lexicon?

Prof. Walter Dorn: Sure.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Thank you very much.

Why does a seat on the UN Security Council matter to Canada? Why should we care whether we have one or not?

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: You'd have to ask previous governments.

We sat on the Security Council once every 10 years, once every decade, from the get-go, and then we lost out. The Security Council, for all its faults...and right now it has a major fault, in that there are major vetos. The veto is being used. They have been unable to reform the voting structure. The five permanent members are unlikely to give up the veto, despite the fact that very good proposals have been put forward for a change in the structure to enlarge it and to change the voting structure, etc. As long as the veto holders hang on to that, it's unlikely to change. Given the relations with Russia right now, the Security Council is much more stymied than it has been since the end of the Cold War.

That said, the Security Council is still the place where the big decisions are made for international peace and security.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Thank you.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: If we're at the table, we can be part of that. Right now we're in the corridor.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Thank you very much.

Your bluntness allows us to make effective recommendations, because we can't if we don't have the facts, so thank you.

As my last question, what should we call this study?

Prof. Walter Dorn: I would recommend finding a name that captures your thesis—I tell this to students who are writing essays—and then subtitling it "Canada's role in international peace operations".

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: Call it "Canada's back".

The Chair: I like that one.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: I'm assuming you've all had access to the Senate report. The Senate committee discussed the same thing 18 months ago.

The Chair: That was in 2016.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie: I told them pretty much what I told you.

The Chair: It's an interesting time to revisit this situation, though, given that we have a new approach and we have a mission. It changes the conversation.

I want to thank both of you and Dr. Zahar. Your expert opinions matter. They're a very important part of this conversation.

Thank you very much for your time.

The meeting is adjourned.

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